

PROPOSED NEW CLAIMS--- INFORMAL---
Attorney Docket No.: 791_174

09/991,061

21. (New) A mold for molding a tire, comprising:

at least two sub-molds, each of said sub-molds comprising a portion of a whole, predetermined shape of said mold, each of said sub-molds further comprising:

a plurality of air removal apertures formed on an interior surface of said sub-molds, each of said apertures being in communication with an exterior surface of said sub-molds via a respective vent channel such that air is discharged from blockades between a green tire present in said mold and said interior surface of said sub-mold; and

a plurality of ventlids corresponding to each said aperture, each said ventlid comprising an integral lid mechanism, said lid mechanism comprising a resilient, chemically inactive material that does not fuse with the green tire and having sufficient durability to withstand repeated use at a temperature of 100-200°C;

wherein the entirety of said lid mechanisms are positioned above said vent channel; and

wherein said lid mechanism maintains a range of open positions by virtue of the resiliency of said lid mechanism such that air is discharged from the blockade via said aperture and said vent channel while said lid mechanism is in any one of said open positions, and wherein said lid mechanism assumes a closed position upon sufficient contact with the green tire in said mold, thereby sealing said aperture such that air and green tire material are prevented from entering said vent channel via said aperture.

22. (New) The mold of claim 21, wherein said ventlid further comprises a flexible plate member and said lid mechanism is defined by a plurality of cuts passing through said ventlid in a perpendicular direction to a surface plane of said ventlid and a lid mechanism baseline;

wherein at least two of said cuts each extend from a substantially opposed portion of a peripheral edge of said ventlid inwardly toward a respective terminal point such that said lid mechanism baseline is defined between said terminal points of said cut portions; and

wherein said lid mechanism extends outwardly from said lid mechanism baseline at a predetermined angle.

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23. (New) The mold of claim 22, wherein said ventlid is fixed to a vent tube via a weld site positioned between a portion of said peripheral edge of said ventlid and said lid mechanism baseline, and wherein said vent tube is disposed in at least one of said vent channels of said sub-molds.

24. (New) The mold of claim 22, wherein said ventlid is directly fixed to a portion of said interior surface of said sub-molds via a weld site positioned between a portion of said peripheral edge of said ventlid and said lid mechanism baseline.

25. (New) The mold of claim 21, wherein said ventlid comprises a silicone elastomer or a fluorocarbon elastomer.